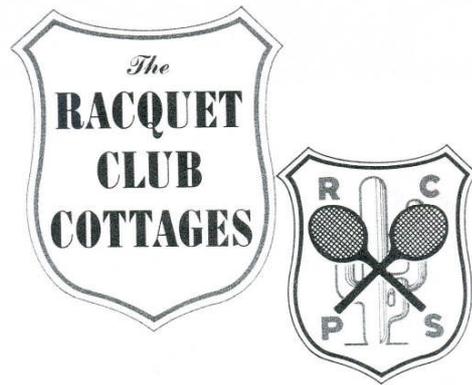


**Racquet Club
Cottages West**
(now known as "Racquet
Club Garden Villas")

**360 West Cabrillo Road
Palm Springs, CA 92262
Nomination Application
for City of Palm Springs
Historic District**



Prepared by
Ronald W. Marshall
for the
Palm Springs Preservation Foundation
May 2013

Acknowledgements

This nomination is part of a joint initiative by the

PALM SPRINGS PRESERVATION FOUNDATION

and the

RACQUET CLUB GARDEN VILLAS HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATION

In Memoriam

**Patrick McGrew
The “Cody Expert”**

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Architectural rendering of a Racquet Club Cottages West unit by William F. Cody

Racquet Club Cottages West (RCCW) (now known as “Racquet Club Garden Villas” (RCGV))

HISTORIC DISTRICT NOMINATION

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Introduction

The Palm Springs Preservation Foundation (PSPF) is a non-profit organization whose mission is “to educate and promote public awareness of the importance of preserving the historical resources and architecture of the city of Palm Springs and the Coachella Valley area.”

Starting in 2008, PSPF has actively lobbied local governments throughout the Coachella Valley to support the creation of historic districts in accordance with their local ordinances. However, due to the foundation’s limited resources, PSPF can only support efforts to create historic districts if there is strong homeowner interest and enthusiasm for such an undertaking.

On March 2, 2013 at the invitation of Racquet Club Garden Villas (RCGV) Homeowners Association (HOA) president Kim Zakowski, PSPF representatives talked to the HOA leadership and about 20 RCGV homeowners about the benefits of historic preservation and historic districts in particular. Despite the general enthusiasm for pursuing historic district designation, PSPF representatives emphasized that PSPF would devote resources to such a project only if, (1) there was a positive vote of the HOA to pursue the nomination and, (2) that a “Document of Owner Support” was circulated among the RCGV homeowners showing that there was general support for the nomination.

On March 30, 2013 the board of directors of the RCGV HOA voted unanimously to pursue the historic district designation of their condominium complex. In early May 2013 PSPF was provided with a Document of Owner Support indicating that more than two-thirds of the RCGV owners supported pursuing historic district status. Copies of both of these documents were provided to the city’s Director of Planning Services in a PSPF letter on May 13, 2013.

PSPF board member and architect Patrick McGrew volunteered to author the historic district nomination and was tasked by the PSPF board to start the project. The PSPF board of directors later assigned the task to board member Ron Marshall.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

SIGNIFICANCE: Racquet Club Cottages West (RCCW) was designed by modernist architect William F. Cody, FAIA and built by developer Paul Trousdale. Additionally, the complex features landscape architecture by designer Phil Shipley. Overall, the complex exhibits numerous stylistic markers that place it in the historic context of Palm Springs' modern period. Furthermore, it is a largely intact example of the significant modernist architecture for which the city is internationally known and should be viewed as a component of the historic trends that define Palm Springs' image as a center of important midcentury architecture (i.e., an historic trend that exemplifies "a particular period of the national, state or local history").

DESIGNATION CRITERIA: The RCCW complex has not previously been evaluated for historic district eligibility possibly due to its direct association with the nearby Racquet Club. While the Racquet Club appears in the 2004 city-wide historic resources survey (and in earlier surveys), RCCW has not been specifically identified in any previous surveys. However, the RCCW complex was prominently chronicled in *The Architecture of William F. Cody: A Desert Retrospective*, a tribute journal published by PSPF in 2004.

A brief summary of the evaluation contained in this nomination is as follows:

8.05.020 (a) paragraph 1 - **Events:** This criterion recognizes properties associated with events or patterns of events or historic trends. In this nomination, the applicable "pattern of events" is the gradual rise of Palm Springs' prominence in midcentury architectural excellence. The RCCW complex is an outstanding example of residential design and the construction of buildings within the context of midcentury desert modernism. The nominated historic district is associated with this pattern of events for its ability to exemplify the modern period of the national, state and local history. *The RCCW complex is associated with this pattern of events, and is associated as well with Criterion 3 for its ability to exemplify a particular period of the national, state or local history. Therefore, the complex qualifies for listing as a Historic District under Criterion 1.*

8.05.020 (a) paragraphs 3, 4 & 5 - **Design/Construction:** The district is eligible under the theme of Modern architecture because it possesses numerous distinctive characteristics that make up the modernist style, including flat roofs, expansive amounts of glass, idiosyncratic use of concrete masonry, etc. Additionally, the work of architect Cody must be catalogued as the work of a "Master" architect because of his record of architectural excellence. *For its distinctive characteristics, as the work of a Master, and for its high artistic values, the RCCW complex qualifies as a Historic District under Criteria 3, 4 & 5.*

SUMMARY: This evaluation finds the RCCW complex eligible for listing as a Palm Springs Historic District under 8.05.020 (a) paragraphs 1, 3, 4 & 5 of the local ordinance's seven criteria (criteria 6 is deemed as inapplicable as the various buildings in the RCCW complex possess "individual distinction"). Additionally, the buildings in the district retain a high degree of architectural integrity.



CITY OF PALM SPRINGS

Department of
Planning Services
3200 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm
Springs, CA 92262
Telephone: 760-323-8245 ~ Fax: 760-322-
8360

HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION

The City of Palm Springs allows for the local designation of historic buildings, sites or districts within the City (Section 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code.) This application packet is to be completed in order to request a historic designation. For additional information, please contact the Department of Planning Services at 760-323-8245 or planning@palmspringsca.gov.

APPLICATION

The completed application and required materials may be submitted to the Department of Planning Services. The submittal will be given a cursory check and will be accepted for filing only if the basic requirements have been met. A case planner will be assigned to the project and will be responsible for a detailed review of the application and all exhibits to ensure that all required information is adequate and accurate. Incomplete applications due to missing or inadequate information will not be accepted for filing. Applicants may be asked to attend scheduled meetings pertaining to their project. These will include the Historic Site Preservation Board (HSPB) and the City Council.

HISTORIC SITE PRESERVATION BOARD (HSPB)

Once the application has been determined to be complete, the HSPB will review the application to determine whether the site meets the minimum qualifications for designation pursuant to Chapter 8.05 of the Palm Springs Municipal Code. If such determination is made, a public hearing will be scheduled for a future meeting.

A public hearing will be held by the HSPB to receive testimony from all interested persons concerning the Historic Site Designation. The public hearing may be continued from time to time, and upon complete consideration, the HSPB will make a recommendation to the City Council. Notice will be provided as indicated below.

CITY COUNCIL

After receiving the recommendation of the Historic Site Preservation Board, a public hearing will be held by the City Council to receive testimony from all interested persons concerning the requested Historic Site Designation. The public hearing may be continued from time to time, and upon complete consideration, the City Council will then conditionally approve, deny, or approve the application as submitted. The City Council's decision on the application is final.

NOTIFICATION

Prior to consideration of the application by the HSPB and the City Council, a notice of public hearing for a Historic Site Designation request will be mailed to all property owners within 400 feet of the subject property a minimum of ten (10) days prior to the hearing dates.



Office Use Only

Date:
Case No.
HSPB No.
Planner:

**CITY OF PALM SPRINGS
Department of Planning Services**

HISTORIC SITE DESIGNATION APPLICATION

TO THE APPLICANT:

Your cooperation in completing this application and supplying the information requested will expedite City review of your application. Application submitted will not be considered until all submittal requirements are met. Staff may require additional information depending upon the specific project. Please submit this completed application and any subsequent material to the Department of Planning Services.

This form is to be used to nominate individual properties for Class 1 or 2 historic designations, or to nominate the formation of historic districts. Applicants are encouraged to review two bulletins from the US Department of Interior for additional information:

- “How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form” (National Register Bulletin 16A / <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16a/>); and
- “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation” (National Register Bulletin 15; <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/>).

Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions in the Bulletins.

1. Property Information

Historic name: Racquet Club Cottages West (RCCW)
 Other names: Racquet Club Garden Villas (RCGV) (current name)
 Address: 360 W. Cabrillo Road, Palm Springs, CA 92262 (historic address 2743 N. Indian Avenue)
 Assessor Parcel Number: See Appendix I for the Assessor’s Map and Appendix II for a listing of APNs)
 Owner’s Name (management company): Desert Resort Management
 Owner’s Address: 42-635 Melanie Place, Ste. 103
 City: Palm Desert State: CA Zip: 92211
 (Mailing Address: Desert Resort Management, Post Office Box 14387, Palm Desert, CA 92255)
 Telephone: (760) 346-1161
 Fax number: (760) 346-9918
 E-mail address: bancheta@drminternet.com

2. Classifications

Ownership of Property. Fill as many boxes as apply.

- Private
- Public - Local
- Public - State
- Public - Federal

Category of Property. Fill only one box.

- Building (Note can include site)
- District
- Site (Exclusive of Structures)
- Structure
- Object

Number of Resources within Property. TOTAL must include at least One (1) in Contributing Column.

Contributing	Non-contributing	
18		Buildings (comprising 37 present-day units and 54 historical units)
1		Sites
2		Structures (includes cabana and pool (carports not included))
		Objects
<hr/>		
21		Total

If the building or site is part of a larger group of properties, enter the name of the multiple-property group; otherwise enter "N/A".
"N/A"

3. Use or Function

Historic Use or Function: Multi-family residential housing

Current Use or Function: Multi-family residential housing

4. Description

Architect: William F. Cody, FAIA

Construction Date and Source: 1959-60 (Multiple sources, including building permits)

Architectural Classification: International Style - Desert Regional Variation

Construction Materials:

Foundation:	Concrete slab	Roof:	Composition
Walls:	Concrete block, stucco, wood	Other:	

Building Description: *Attach a description of the Building / Site / District, including all character defining features on one or more additional sheets. (See pages 13-21 and Appendix IX)*

5. Criteria (Fill all boxes that apply for the criteria qualifying the property for listing.)

Events

- (1) Fill this box if the property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Persons

- (2) Fill this box if the property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Architecture

- (3) Fill this box if the property reflects or exemplifies a particular period of national, State or local history, or
- (4) Fill this box if the property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or
- (5) Fill this box if the property represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or
- (6) Fill this box if the property represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

Archeology

- (7) Fill this box if the property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Other Criteria Considerations (Check all the boxes that apply.)

- the property is owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- the property has been removed from its original location.
- the property is a birthplace
- the property is a grave or cemetery.
- the property is a reconstructed building, object, or structure
- the property is commemorative
- the property is less than 50 years of age or has achieved significance within the past 50 years

6. Statement of Significance

History

A. The Racquet Club. Racquet Club Cottages West (RCCW) (today the Racquet Club Garden Villas) (RCGV) was designed and built to be an important element of the world-famous Racquet Club. Probably the most succinct history of the creation of the Racquet Club appears in the 1960-61 Annual Pictorial edition of *Palm Springs Life* magazine in an article entitled “The Racquet Club: Movie Colony Hideaway”:

Tennis enthusiasts [and actors] Charles Farrell and Ralph Bellamy, who tired of waiting to play on the courts at El Mirador Hotel, built their own, thereby launching the Racquet Club twenty-five years ago [i.e., 1934]. They bought fifty-two acres from Alvah Hicks for \$3,500. Recalls Tony Burke, long time Village resident, “Everybody thought it was worthless. It was miles out, and we all scoffed at the idea of playing tennis out there, of all things, in this howling wind and with the sand blowing.” But time has proved the Racquet Club far from worthless – it was sold early in 1959 for a price in excess of \$1 million.

Opened on Christmas Day of 1934, the Racquet Club was a modest enterprise consisting of only a snack bar and two tennis courts. However, from the beginning, the Racquet Club attracted the residents of the nearby movie colony. Early visitors included Jane Wyman, Edgar Bergen, Burgess Meredith, Humphrey Bogart, Errol Flynn, Lana Turner and others. With the building of the Racquet Club swimming pool in 1935, the club’s expansion was underway. The dining room was enlarged in 1937 and again in 1951. In 1946, 35 cottages were built along the banks of Netcher’s Creek (which winds through the club’s grounds). More cottages were added in 1956 to accommodate the increasing numbers of visitors to the club.

At the time of construction of RCCW, Palm Springs’ Racquet Club had become the social center of the city (from “Hideaway”):

Always recognized as a hideaway for members of the movie colony, many members of the entertainment world are frequently found relaxing at the Racquet Club. Among the perennial habitués are George Bautzer and Dana Wynter, the Kirk Douglas’, George Montgomery and Dinah Shore, Jackie Cooper, Zsa Zsa, Eva and Jolie Gabor, Tony Curtis and Janet Leigh and the Louis Jordan’s....rarely does a Hollywoodite spend a few days in Palm Springs without making at least one stop at the popular Racquet Club.

B. Racquet Club Cottages West. A circa 1960 brochure for the RCCW project explained the necessity for the “new cottages” as follows: “The cottages will be primarily for people who wish to regularly go to the Springs for the weekend or for those who wish to make Palm Springs their permanent winter home.” In the June/July 1960 issue of *Palm Springs Life* magazine, in an article by Jan Lotz entitled “Tennis’ Silver Anniversary on the Desert,” the author explained the socio-economic rationale for building Racquet Club Cottages West in more detail:

Palm Springs now boasts scores of luxurious hotels, fashionable specialty shops, department stores and restaurants. As Palm Springs continues to expand, it...

[is becoming] increasingly difficult for both permanent and winter residents to staff their homes with maids, gardeners, cooks, housekeepers, nursemaids and maintenance men. Many members of the Racquet Club...[are] among those who experience difficulty in staffing the homes which they purchased or rented in the desert spa, and they ...[express] a desire for dwellings which ...[will] provide the privacy of a desert home without any of its domestic responsibilities.

This year [1960], in the club's final expansion program, luxurious new Racquet Club Cottages are being created to meet this need. The cottages...[are] designed by William F. Cody, A.I.A.; who is well known for his ability to make dramatic use of the desert terrain in his plans. To ensure perfection in the creation of these cottages, Paul W. Trousdale, one of America's most respected builders...[will] supervise the construction. Landscaping in the new cottage area...[is being] designed by Phil Shipley and interior decoration...[is being] directed by L. R. Belmuth and Company of Los Angeles.

The Lotz article goes on to say that the cottages would be available "in four designs—the Full Cottage (comprised of living room, dining alcove, bedroom, two dressing rooms, two baths and kitchen), the Living Room Suite, the Bachelor and the Bedroom Suite." Each unit was fully-furnished with the lessee being offered "a choice of several arrangements." Visitors to the cottages were offered the use of all Racquet Club conveniences (e.g., tennis courts, swimming pool, putting greens, shuffleboard court, etc.) in addition to maid service and room service. Visiting businessmen had access to the club's 24-hour switchboard service and were told there was "a public stenographer on the premises." The guidelines for renting the cottages were quite generous and forward-thinking:

Although the cottages will be leased on an annual basis, there is an interesting innovation in the leasing plan. At times when the lessee does not plan to occupy his cottage, he may permit The Racquet Club to sublease it for him; he will receive 100 per cent of the revenue. Several Racquet Club members are planning to take cottages on a joint lease with friends from other parts of the country.

Originally intended to be a much larger development (see "Site Planning" paragraph), the RCCW ran into money problems early on and was scaled back to about half of its originally intended physical size and number of units. Both builder Trousdale (and later Racquet Club owner Robert S. Morton) placed some of the blame on architect Cody. In an August 24, 1959 letter to Cody, Trousdale writes:

Dear Bill:

We are rapidly running out of dough [money] to pay you, the subs or anyone else at the Racquet Club until such time as we can get the construction loan on.

The construction loan is being held up by a lack of estimates on the cottages. The estimates are being held up by a lack of a door and window schedule, specifications and necessary details. Therefore it all hinges on you.

Three weeks later, in a September 17, 1959 Racquet Club letter from Morton to Cody, Morton says:

We wish to advise you that we do not contemplate building the four cottages on the Northwest corner of the existing site in the near future. Consequently you are

not to proceed with working drawings on these units.

With respect to the proposed 71 units to be built on the property immediately West of the present Club site, it is our intention to construct these units in increments. The first increment will include the 21 units on the Easterly end of the 9.6-acre parcel. We wish you to proceed with the working drawings on the 21 units at this time.

On September 14, 1959, just three days before the letter which curtailed the project, Morton had sent a scathing letter to Cody placing some of the blame for the money problems at Cody's doorstep. In the letter Morton tells Cody:

It is with great disappointment to me that this letter must be written; however, the unsatisfactory nature of the [architectural] drawings and specifications furnished [to] us...force me to do so.

Trousdale Construction Company advised that, to date, a great percentage of your drawings have been either incomplete, grossly inaccurate, or, in some cases unworkable. This condition is, of course, adding substantially and unnecessarily to our expenditures....Since our first discussion[s]...I have repeatedly emphasized the importance of keeping costs down!

In Cody's defense, Morton reportedly was almost universally disliked and the foregoing exchange may have been merely a business tactic. Additionally, architect William LaVoie (who owns and occupies an RCCW unit) makes the following observation about the practicality and elegance of Cody's 8' grid design:

I [have] observed that...drawings are as spare as the modernist design. It is immediately obvious from the working drawings that most wall and post center-lines fall on an 8' grid across the [RCCW] development. Building components: windows, solid doors, sliding glass doors, bathroom layouts, [etc.] are the same size throughout the complex, which had the economy of not requiring complex schedules to describe the components.

In the end, the RCCW project stalled and only 54 "historic" units were completed.

(Note: Due the many ways the number of units or cottages can be counted, occasionally the figures mentioned in correspondence and in magazine reports are hard to reconcile. For example, a "cottage" can be referred to either as a single unit or as two units depending upon the context: this is explained more fully in the "Architecture" section of this nomination).

C. Permit History. There exists extensive documentation in the form of over 700 building, electrical and plumbing permits, job cards, pool inspections, etc., associated with the Racquet Club address at 2743 North Indian Avenue. Many of these specifically identify Racquet Club Cottages West. Additionally, an extensive permit history exists for the later 360 W. Cabrillo Avenue address and Racquet Club Garden Villas. One of the earliest mentions of construction work being done at "Racquet Club Cottages, West" is a plumbing permit dated November 11, 1959 (#B723) and an electrical permit dated December 7, 1959 (#A2114).

The most historically significant documents in city records are two building permits which confirm a two-phase process of construction at Racquet Club Cottages West:

- Building Permit #B1357 dated November 16, 1959 for Racquet Club Cottages

West at 2743 North Indian Avenue identifies "Trousdale Const. Co." as the contractor and describes the work as "Construct 34 apartment cottages frame and stucco const. compo. roof." Area of the project is cited as "18,800 sq. ft." Total value of the work is quoted as "\$200,000.00."

- Building Permit #B2328 dated June 23, 1960 for Racquet Club Cottage West at 2743 North Indian Avenue again identifies "Trousdale Const." as the contractor and describes the work as "Add 28 units to existing 34; frame and stucco const., compo roof; also 2 re-[illegible]." Area of the project is cited as "14,784 sq. ft." Total value of the work is quoted as "\$210,000.[00]."

Together, these building permits confirm that a total of 54 historical units were constructed, i.e., 34 units initially and 28 more approximately eight months later. Over the intervening 50+ years, these historical units have been combined into the 37 units which exist today.

D. Local Construction Context. While initially intended as guest cottages for visitors to the Racquet Club, Racquet Club Cottages West was, in time, converted to condominiums. This conversion is consistent with the trend that was occurring throughout Palm Springs starting in the 1960s (mostly with "co-operatives") with many "conversions" not occurring until the 1980s (the RCGV HOA articles of incorporation are dated September 1, 1981). However, due to a paucity of authoritative documentation from the mid-1960s through the 1970s, it is difficult to determine the extent of private ownership during that time period. While those details are not critical to this application, further research might uncover this information.

Although originally intended as essentially hotel apartments, RCCW should more properly be viewed as part of the multi-family residential building boom that occurred in Palm Springs in the early 1960s (albeit in large measure in the south part of the city). Similar "lifestyle" multi-family residential projects include Royal Hawaiian Estates (1960), Park Imperial South (1960), Canyon View Estates (1962), etc. The history of these individual complexes is extensively chronicled in the PSPF's tribute journal *The Architecture of Desert Leisure* which provides a more nuanced context for the multi-family residential building trend in Palm Springs in the 1960s.

E. National Context. The concept of a condominium, where the ownership of a building or property is a shared entity is a relatively modern phenomenon, although communal living is not. The first "condominium" was built in the United States in 1960 in Salt Lake City, Utah. The concept quickly grew in popularity and by the end of the decade condominiums were present in all 50 states.

F. Miscellany. On August 8, 2002 RCGV homeowners were informed by the city of Palm Springs' Department of Planning & Building that their addresses had been changed from "2743 N Indian Canyon Drive" to "360 Cabrillo Road."

The Architect, Builder and Landscape Architect

A biography of RCCW architect William F. Cody is found at Appendix III. A biography of RCCW builder Paul W. Trousdale is found at Appendix IV. A brief biography of RCCW landscape architect Philip A. Shipley is found at Appendix V.

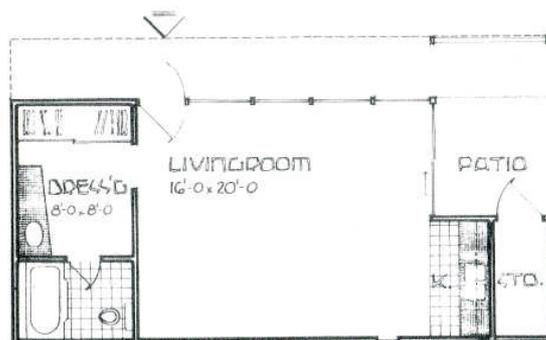
The Architecture

Designed on an 8-foot by 8-foot grid, the 54 original historic “apartments” comprising the RCCW condominium complex consist of only two floor plans (The Bachelor and Full Cottage) which are flipped and rotated to create visual interest. All units were designed and built in concert using the same architectural vernacular. Inspired by the International Style, the low-slung single-level buildings feature stucco, concrete block and full-height glass walls which are capped by flat roofs. Deep overhanging eaves provide passive sun control. The geometry of each unit is rigorously orthogonal: there are no curves used in the layout of the units. Visual interest within the different facades is created by a variation of different architectural elements, most notably concrete block.

The four original floorplans (many of which are still intact today) included a studio design called “The Bachelor,” a one-bedroom design called a “Bedroom Suite,” a design called a “Living Room Suite” and the “Full Cottage” design.

The “Bachelor” floorplan consists of a large 16’x20’ combination living room-bedroom with sliding glass doors that connect the living room with a large enclosed patio. Adjoining the living room is an 8’x8’ dressing room (with closet space) and adjoining the dressing room is a full-size bath with both tub and shower. Originally included with this design was a fully-equipped kitchenette and “wide studio couches” which at night were converted to “comfortable beds.”

THE BACHELOR

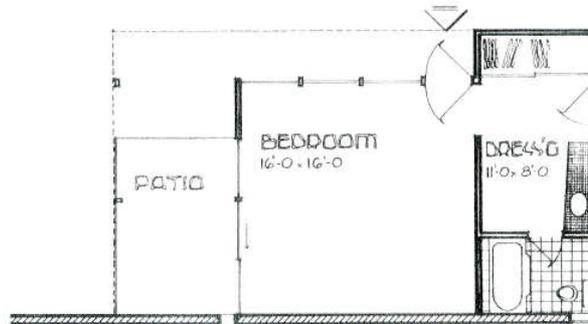


Bachelor Design Floorplan

(Schematics in this section may not be reproduced without consent of Special Collections, Univ. Archives Cal Poly except for purposes of this nomination)

The “Bedroom Suite” design was advertised as an option for those “who want a small but permanent place in the desert” and was lauded for its “compactness” in advertisements. The bedroom, a relatively spacious 16’x16’, adjoins an 8’x10’ dressing

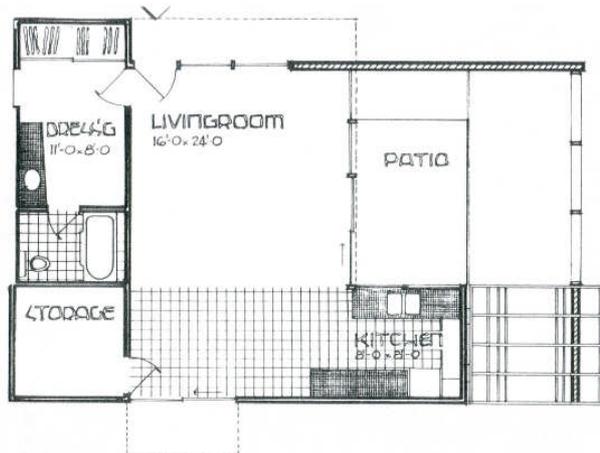
room which further adjoins a bath with both tub and shower. (Because the Bedroom Suite units were designed without kitchens they have been combined throughout the RCCW condominium complex with other units).



THE BEDROOM SUITE

Bedroom Suite Floorplan

The “Living Room Suite” floorplan consists of an extra-large 16’x24’ combination living room-bedroom with sliding glass doors that connect the living room with a large enclosed patio. This living room patio combination was lauded in advertisements as being capable of creating “an indoor-outdoor room...[of] 24’x32” in dimension. Adjoining the living room is an 11’x8’ dressing room (with closet space) and adjoining the dressing room is a full-size bath with both tub and shower. Also adjoining the living room, “to add to the feeling of size,” is a dining alcove, plus a complete kitchen with stove. This design also includes a storage area which is accessed from inside the unit.

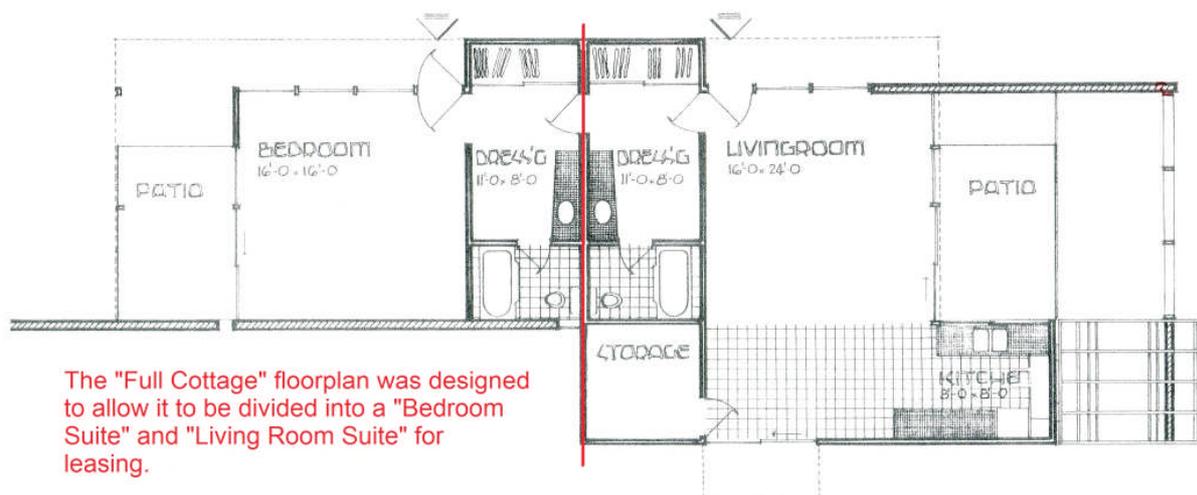


THE LIVING ROOM SUITE

Living Room Suite Floorplan

The largest floorplan, the “Full Cottage” design is a Bedroom Suite design combined with a Living Room Suite design. Or, more precisely, the Full Cottage plan can be divided into a Bedroom Suite and a Living Room Suite. The latter interpretation is more

accurate because (fortuitously for researchers) an elaborate 12-page brochure for Racquet Club Cottages West was produced which includes a detailed plot plan. The circa 1959 brochure's plot plan only shows Full Cottages and Bachelor units. This convention is explained in the brochure which asserts that the Full Cottage units "can be divided into a living room suite and a bedroom suite and can be leased separately" (as with many hotel rentals, only the door between the adjoining units needed to be locked). Because Bedroom Suite units were designed without kitchens and the Living Room Suites without dedicated bedrooms, they were necessarily combined--either originally or at a later date--throughout the RCCW complex. For example, current RCGV unit #120, i.e., historic units 120 (Bedroom Suite) and 121 (Living Room Suite) seamlessly combine to create the Full Cottage floorplan. While the early plot plan shows this as a Full Cottage unit, almost all later maps of the complex show the units rationalized into the living room suites and bedroom suites each with unit numbers. It is virtually impossible to determine today whether any Full Cottage was originally (and only) leased and occupied as Full Cottage design or was initially leased out as two separate units which were combined at a later date. Regardless, the Full Cottage design is a very functional and agreeable design and includes the added luxury of "his and her" dressing rooms.



Full Cottage Floorplan

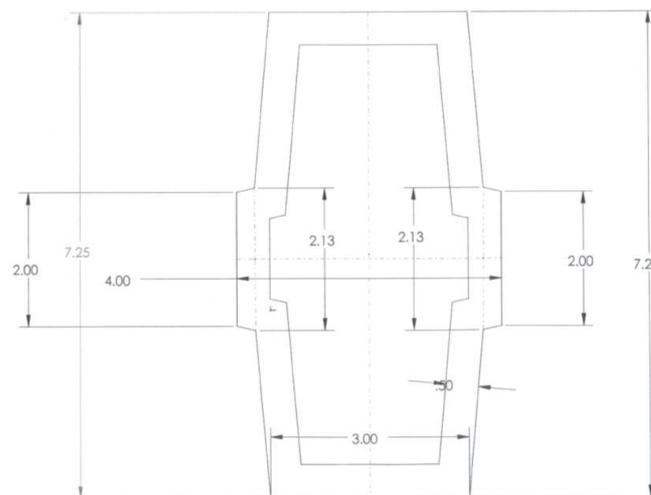
Despite an early life as rentals, the original 54 numbered "historical" units have been combined back into the Full Cottage and Bachelor floorplans first laid out in the plot plan. As a practical matter, this has made what were essentially short-term apartment rentals suitable for full-time occupancy. The floorplans of these "married" units work well as this was obviously a consideration in the Cody designs.

In the majority of the RCCW units (and typical of Cody's well-known obsession with the thinnest profiles possible) window glass disappears into the ceiling, walls and support posts with no additional trim being used. This creates the clean, modernist aesthetic for which Cody is lauded. This attention to detail, or as Cody referred to it "hush and flush," sets the architect apart from many of his contemporaries. Another notable architectural detail, found in many of Cody's contemporaneous residential commissions such as the

Shamel Residence (1962) and James Logan Abernathy Residence (1962), is the large window ending at the top of the kitchen counters. This window detail (placed in a usually overlooked utilitarian part of the home) dramatically creates the “indoor-outdoor” effect for which California’s modernist architects, in particular, were renowned.

Perhaps one of the most interesting and unique architectural aspects of the RCCW condominium complex is Cody’s idiosyncratic use of concrete screen block. The design of the RCCW concrete screen block is “non-standard” and most likely unique to the RCCW complex. While standard screen block is dimensioned at a robust 12”x12”x4” the RCCW screen block is a relatively slight 7.25”x4”x3.5”. At the time of Cody’s design for RCCW (1959) the standard screen block dimensions were well-established. Hence, the delicate proportions of the block design appear to be wholly intentional and consistent with, as architect E. Stewart Williams is quoted, “[Cody’s] sense of beautiful portion.”

The RCCW concrete screen block appears to have been “dry-packed” (a technique that created a slight “cottage-cheese” texture on the block facing). Unsubstantiated lore asserts that Cody intentionally designed the finished screen block walls to resemble a tennis net).



Schematic of concrete screen block design

In recent years, as some of the original concrete screen block has deteriorated, it has been replaced. Fortunately, the replacement block is a close color match to the original (a light brownish-red) albeit with a slightly smoother, more “finished” look. This replacement block is created with wetter (i.e., more “plastic”) concrete formed in Styrofoam molds. During manufacture the excess concrete at the top of the form is smoothly leveled with a screed board. Cleverly, the Styrofoam forms are retained for shipping and the slightly bumpy surface of the Styrofoam imparts a texture to the new block that resembles the original cottage-cheese texture of the original block. In short, the aesthetic characteristics of Cody’s original screen block design are being well replicated with the replacement block.

Adjacent to the RCCW cabana is use of a more common concrete screen block design, the well-known “Empress” pattern (patent No. 184,463 of February 17, 1959 by architect Edward Durrell Stone). These screen block walls appear to have been installed at a later date and were probably intended to add more privacy to the pool area. Fortunately, the Empress block is “of the era” and is sympathetic to the overall aesthetic of the complex.

Throughout the RCCW complex the exterior facades of the units are relatively intact with little compromise. Windows on some units have been replaced or modified and some “gaps” between units have been closed in to create either exterior-access storage areas or indoor storage (such as closets). Yet despite these minor modifications (virtually all of which are reversible) the buildings and site of the RCCW complex retain a high degree of integrity and remain largely intact (see detailed Integrity Analysis).

Site Description

Location. The RCCW complex is bounded by West Cabrillo Road to the south, Dominguez Road to the north, a residential parcel to the west and a Desert Water Agency right-of-way to the east. A full legal description of the property is provided at Appendix VI (it is recommended that the legal description be cited to delineate the boundaries of the proposed historic district). A listing of current mailing addresses is provided at Appendix VII. As previously mentioned, a listing of individual assessor parcel numbers is provided at Appendix II.



RCCW Complex Relative to Street Grid

General. Constructed on land adjacent to the world-famous Racquet Club, Racquet Club Cottages West was designed by Palm Springs architect William F. Cody. Sited on approximately 3.2 acres in the shadow of the San Jacinto Mountains, the complex today

consists of 37 units (54 “historical” units) in 18 buildings and two structures. Located at the western end of the complex, the pool is surrounded by a large open area of landscaping (grass), which serves as a buffer between the pool and the western-most units. A fence enclosing the pool was added (at an unknown date) presumably due to safety requirements. Although detached, the westernmost buildings of the complex are arranged in a half-circle creating an enclosure for the common center courtyard. This circa 1960 site plan (oriented to the west) is still remarkably accurate and shows details (e.g., such as pool, cabana, water features and sidewalks) most of which are still extant. Not shown is the western portion of the parking lot and more recent perimeter parking structures.



Early “As-Built” Site Plan of RCCW Showing Individual Rental or “Historical” Units.

Site planning. The evolution of the site planning of the RCCW complex is quite interesting as the original plot plan for historic Racquet Club Cottages West shows the development extending westward all the way to “Anza” (i.e., De Anza) Road. The original plan, which encompassed almost 10 acres, included an additional 26 Full Cottages and 7 Bachelor designs (which would have resulted in another 59 rental units, i.e., $(26 \times 2) + 7 = 59$). The original (unbuilt) site plan was symmetrical along an east-west axis and north-south axis both intersecting at the pool area.



Early RCCW “Plot Plan” Showing Unrealized Northeastern Portion of Site. Bachelor Units are Notated with a “B” Prefix (plan is oriented north).

Although the original site plan (with its two putting greens) was never fully realized, Cody's somewhat truncated plan still works remarkably well. Today, in its "as-built" configuration, the siting of the buildings is still symmetric along an east-west axis through the center of the complex. Traffic circulation flows around the complex's outer perimeter. (Because the property line on the east side of the complex follows the Whitewater Mutual Water Company (now Desert Water Agency) right-of-way, the site plan slightly compensates by adding a few extra units in the southwestern portion of the site).

From a less academic perspective, the RCCW buildings are heavily weighted towards the east side the property. This would have provided the "eastern" residents with the easiest and most immediate access to the Racquet Club amenities (now closed). Compensating for the poorer access to the Racquet Club, the "western" residents are rewarded by having their buildings sited around the pool area which also serves as the *de facto* social hub of the complex. The original (un-built) western portion of the site was to include two putting greens.

Yet despite Cody's rather rigidly orthogonal site plan, visitors to the complex are generally unaware of the symmetry and can find the lay-out of the RCCW complex quite confusing: this creates the illusion of a small village that has evolved on the site. This lends greatly to the "intimate" feel of the complex, a highly desired trait in any residential development. This sleight-of-hand is achieved in a number of ways. The design for the concrete flatwork (i.e., sidewalks, etc.) has these usually secondary elements curve and meander like tendrils, or branches, throughout the site, softening and disguising the orthogonal site plan. (Regardless of whether this was Cody's original intent, or collaboration with the landscape architect, the overall effect is striking). Secondly, the verdant and lush landscape architecture softens building corners and provides visual interest with a variety of tree types (some exotic, including Orchid trees) and plant types.

Reaching all the way back to 19th century British planner Ebenezer Howard's *Garden City*, architects have attempted to combine the best of city and rural life to create a utopian environment. Cody succeeds by creating an environment free from cars, a popular symbol of urban distress, by siting all vehicular roads and carports on the perimeter of the complex. As such, the buildings turn their "fronts" away from the street. The "front porches" of the units look at greenery or the pool which becomes the new street-scape.

Landscape Architecture

Perhaps the most striking feature of the landscape architecture in the RCCW complex is the water feature which consists of a small fountain and two small collecting pools (just to the east of the swimming pool), a small stream which flows to an "oasis" and yet another small stream which flows to a recirculation terminus near the eastern edge of the property. The water feature meanders through the east-west axis of the complex creating a verdant and lush environment which dramatically contrasts with the surrounding desert environment. These streams divide and modulate the site moderating the orthogonal building siting. The original site plan mirrored the current

water feature configuration with a collecting pool just to the west of the cabana which meandered westward.

While credit for the RCCW landscape design is given generically to Phil Shipley (principal of the landscaping firm Shipley and Associates), landscape architect W. Garrett Carlson (principal of LANDARC of Beverly Hills) asserts in a March 18, 2013 letter to the RCGV HOA president that landscape architect Dudley Trudgett (1908-1985), Shipley's "head designer," should be more specifically credited with the landscape design of RCCW complex. According to Carlson:

Dudley [Trudgett] graduated from Berkeley in 1934 and went to Harvard where he studied with Garrett Eckbo, Dan Kiley and James Rose. When the war broke out he joined the navy and...after the war he went to India with a special group of architects [and] city planners to design small cities outside of New Delhi. He lived in India for 5 years working on these projects. During this time he also traveled to Japan where he worked with Skidmore's [i.e., Skidmore, Owings & Merrill] office rebuilding Japan. His travels around the world helped him create his unique style of design. I felt and still feel to this day that Dudley [Trudgett] was one of the greatest [landscape] designers of his time.

In a May 21 interview with the author, Carlson opined that the RCCW's landscape architecture was a fine example of Trudgett's "natural design" approach and exhibits "Dudley's stamp." According to Carlson, designer Trudgett could deftly combine Japanese and European landscaping aesthetics ("a little of each") into a unified plan. Trudgett was well-known for the natural environment he created with "gentle streams and meandering pathways" (both elements of the RCCW landscaping plan to this day). Finally, according to Carlson, Trudgett typically used an abundance of trees and was fond of saying "trees make people happy."

One authoritative source confirms that "Trudgett graduated with a degree in landscape architecture from the University of California, Berkeley in 1934. Between 1935 and 1936 he attended Harvard's Graduate School of Design, focusing on city planning."

Trudgett's personal papers reside at the Environmental Design Archive, College of Environmental Design, University of California, Berkeley. However, no obvious mention of the RCCW project can be found in the on-line index.

Additional architectural details and descriptions can be found in Appendix IX, Photographic Documentation of Buildings and Site.

HISTORIC CONTEXT

To qualify as a Palm Springs Historic District, the contributing structures must be significant; that is, they must represent a significant part of the history, architecture, or archeology, of an area, and they must have the characteristics that make them a good representative of properties associated with that aspect of the past. The significance of an historic district can be properly understood when it is evaluated within its historic context. Historic contexts are those patterns or trends in history by which a specific district is understood and its meaning (and ultimately its significance) within history is made clear. In order to decide whether a district's contributing properties are

significant within their historic context, it must be determined which facet of history the district represents; the significance of that facet of history; whether the subject district has relevance in illustrating the historic context; how the district illustrates that history; and an analysis of the physical features the contributing properties in the district possess to determine if they convey the aspect or history with which they are associated. If the subject district represents an important aspect of the area's history (under any of the seven criteria recognized by the Municipal Code) *and* possesses the requisite quality of integrity, then it qualifies as a historic district.

BACKGROUND / HISTORIC CONTEXT

The relatively short history of Palm Springs can be organized into three more or less distinct periods that include Prehistory, the Settlement Period, and the Modern Period. It is within the context of the last period that this building will be evaluated.

Modern Period (1925-1960s): This period can be considered to have begun with the construction of the area's first "modern" structure, Rudolph Schindler's Paul and Betty Popenoe Cabin in 1922. With this building the area's predominant architectural style, which was based on well-established Mexican and Spanish Colonial motifs, began to change. Incorporation of the town of Palm Springs followed in 1938. During the post-WWII era, Palm Springs' economy prospered through tourism. Hollywood celebrities discovered the desert oasis and patronized its hotels, inns, nightclubs and restaurants; celebrity-seeking tourists soon followed, transforming Palm Springs from a sleepy village into an increasingly cosmopolitan environment that saw the construction of schools, hospitals, an airport and other important public works projects. The commercial core along Palm Canyon Drive (originally Main Street) flourished. In the 1950s the downtown core was expanded by the construction of the cross-axis of Tahquitz-McCallum Way that extended from the center of the original settlement to the airport, spurring new development along the way. Early private residential development also expanded into new sub-divisions composed of midcentury modern second homes in the flat lands surrounding the town's original core.

Palm Springs' Hollywood associations certainly imparted an air of sophistication to the city. By 1964, the city had built a reputation for cutting edge architecture as a result of local architectural practitioners like John Porter Clark, Albert Frey, E. Stewart Williams, William F. Cody and Donald Wexler.

EVALUATION:

Criterion 1: Significant Event (*Completed because Criterion 1 is marked above*)

To qualify for listing under this criterion, a property must be associated with one or more events important in the defined historic context. *Criterion 1 recognizes properties associated with events or patterns of events or historic trends, such as the gradual rise of the city's prominence in architectural excellence in midcentury modern architecture that is an important pattern of events within this associated context. The RCCW complex is an outstanding example of multi-family residential design and construction of buildings within the context of midcentury desert Modernism. The*

RCCW complex is associated with this pattern of events for its ability to exemplify the modern period of the national, state and local history. Therefore, the contributing properties within the district qualify for listing as a Historic District under Criterion 1.

ARCHITECTURE (Criteria 3 – 6)

Criterion 3: *(That reflects or exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history.)*

Racquet Club Cottages West (1959-60) was designed by Palm Springs modernist architect William F. Cody. The stylistic markers of the buildings comprising the historic district place them directly in the historic context of Palm Springs' Modern Period. One of the city's lesser-known condominium complexes, the buildings comprising the historic district represent a prime and largely intact example of the significant modernist architecture for which Palm Springs is widely known. As such the contributing properties in the district may be viewed as an important component of the historic trends that have come to define Palm Springs' image as a center of important midcentury architecture, i.e., an historic trend that exemplifies a particular period of the national, state or local history. The contributing properties within the district qualify for listing as a Historic District on the local registry under Criterion 3.

Criterion 4: *(That embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction; or) Type, Period, and Method of Construction: "Type, period, or method of construction" refers to the way certain properties are related to one another by cultural tradition or function, by dates of construction or style, or by choice or availability of materials and technology. To be eligible under this Criterion, a property must clearly illustrate, through "distinctive characteristics" a pattern of features common to a particular class of resources. "Distinctive characteristics" are the physical features or traits that commonly recur in individual types, periods, or methods of construction. To be eligible, a property must clearly contain enough of those characteristics to be considered a true representative of a particular type, period, or method of construction. Characteristics can be expressed in terms such as form, proportion, structure, plan, style, or materials.*

The contributing properties in the district are eligible under the theme of Modern architecture because they possess distinctive characteristics that make up the many qualities of the style, such as overall horizontality, expression of structure, flat roofs, expansive amounts of glass, use of inexpensive, machine produced materials, masonry, etc. The contributing properties in the district are eligible because, in total, they represent important example of building practices in Palm Springs at midcentury. The contributing properties in the district building qualify as a Historic District on the local registry under Criterion 4.

Criterion 5: *(That (a): represents the work of a master builder, designer, artist, or architect whose individual genius influenced his age; or (b): that possesses high artistic value).*

5a: Work of a Master: A master is a figure of generally recognized greatness in a field, a known craftsman of consummate skill. The property must express a particular phase in the development of the master's career, an aspect of his work, or a particular idea or theme in his craft. A property is not eligible as the work of a master, however, simply because it was designed by a prominent architect. For example, not every building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright is eligible under this portion of Criterion 5, although it might meet other Criteria.

William F. Cody is a well-recognized and regionally-prominent practitioner of Modernist architecture who was nationally influential due to his country club designs. A detailed biography of architect Cody can be found at Appendix III.

5b: Properties possessing high artistic values: High artistic values may be expressed in many ways, including areas as diverse as community design or planning, engineering, and sculpture. The contributing properties in an historic district can be eligible for "high artistic values" if they so fully articulate a particular concept of design that they express an aesthetic ideal. As an example of the maturing modernist movement, the contributing properties of Cody's RCCW complex certainly articulate the best of residential "lifestyle" modernism to a level of excellence and confidence that, in total, they could easily be considered an aesthetic ideal. As the work of a Master, and for its high artistic values, the contributing properties in the district qualify as a Historic District under Criterion 5.

Criterion 6: (That represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction). This Criterion was created to address the resources contained within a potential historic district. However, because the buildings in the proposed historic district do possess individual distinction and could qualify individually as Class 1 Historic Sites under the previous criteria, Criterion 6 does not apply. Hence, the RCCW complex does not qualify under Criterion 6.

ARCHEOLOGY

Criterion 7: (That has yielded or may be likely to yield information important to the national, state or local history or prehistory.) The RCCW complex does not qualify for listing on the local registry under Criterion 7.

7. Integrity Analysis (using U.S. Secretary of Interior Standards)

INTEGRITY

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. To be listed in the local registry, a property must not only be shown to be significant under the criteria, but it also must have integrity. The evaluation of integrity is sometimes a subjective judgment, but it must always be grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance. Historic properties either retain integrity (that is, convey their significance) or they do not. The definition of integrity includes seven aspects or qualities. To retain historic integrity a property will always possess several,

and usually most, of the aspects. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance. Determining which of these aspects are most important to a particular property requires knowing why, where, and when the property is significant. The following sections define the seven aspects and explain how they combine to produce integrity.

LOCATION

Location is the place where an historic property was constructed or the place where an historic event occurred. The relationship between the property and its location is often important to understanding why the property was created or why something happened. The actual location of a historic property, complemented by its setting, is particularly important in recapturing the sense of historic events and persons. Except in rare cases, the relationship between a property and its historic associations is destroyed if the property is moved. ***The RCCW complex remains in its original location and therefore qualifies under this aspect.***

DESIGN

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. It results from conscious decisions made during the original conception and planning of a property and applies to activities as diverse as community planning, engineering, architecture, and landscape architecture. Design includes such elements as organization of space, proportion, scale, technology, ornamentation, and materials. A property's design reflects historic functions and technologies as well as aesthetics. It includes such considerations as the structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; pattern of fenestration; textures and colors of surface materials; type, amount, and style of ornamental detailing. ***Although the units and site of the RCCW complex have seen some minor alterations, the essential characteristics of form, plan, space, structure, and style have survived intact. Similarly, the structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; pattern of fenestration; and the type, amount, and style of detailing, has largely survived. Some exterior surface materials (concrete block and metal fascia) have been painted but this is a relatively insignificant and reversible change. Fortunately, there is extensive documentation in the form of plans and photographs that clearly illustrate the original design intent of the architect.***

SETTING

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. Whereas location refers to the specific place where a property was built or an event occurred, setting refers to the *character* of the place in which the property played its historical role. It involves *how*, not just *where*, the property is situated and its relationship to surrounding features and open space. Setting often reflects the basic physical conditions under which a property was built and the functions it was intended to serve. In addition, the way in which a property is positioned in its environment can reflect the designer's concept of nature and aesthetic preferences. ***The setting of the RCCW complex***

continues to reflect the architect's original design relationship of site and structure.

MATERIALS

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. The choice and combination of materials reveals the preferences of those who created the property and indicate the availability of particular types of materials and technologies. ***As mentioned previously, while some of the RCCW complex exterior surface materials have been painted, this change does not constitute a significant loss of the physical elements that expressed the design during the building's period of significance; the particular pattern and configuration that today forms the buildings and site survives intact. Additionally, the few materials that are being replaced (e.g., the concrete screen block) are being replaced with sympathetic and faithful reproductions of the materials originally used.***

WORKMANSHIP

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. It is the evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing or altering a building, structure, object, or site. Workmanship can apply to the property as a whole or to its individual components. It can be expressed in vernacular methods of construction and plain finishes or in highly sophisticated configurations and ornamental detailing. It can be based on common traditions or innovative period techniques. Workmanship is important because it can furnish evidence of the technology of a craft, illustrate the aesthetic principles of a historic or prehistoric period, and reveal individual, local, regional, or national applications of both technological practices and aesthetic principles. Examples of workmanship in historic buildings include tooling, carving, painting, graining, turning, and joinery. ***Within the buildings of the RCCW complex, the workmanship is comprised of integral ornamental detailing reflected in concrete block, glass and aluminum. The property continues to express a high degree of contemporary period workmanship.***

FEELING

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. For example, a rural historic district retaining original design, materials, workmanship, and setting will relate the feeling of agricultural life in the 19th century. ***When constructed, the RCCW complex unapologetically catered to the aspiring upper middle class. As such the "feeling" of the buildings necessarily had to exude urbanity albeit it in a more informal resort location. The early 1960s were a sophisticated, forward-looking and optimistic time, a feeling still expressed in the design of the complex. Accordingly, the RCCW complex retains the integrity of feeling.***

ASSOCIATION

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. A property retains association if it *is* the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character. For example, a Revolutionary War battlefield whose natural and man-made elements have remained intact since the 18th century will retain its quality of association with the battle. Because feeling and association depend on individual perceptions, their retention alone is never sufficient to support eligibility of a property for the National Register. ***As previously stated in this nomination, the RCCW complex is an important example of midcentury multi-family residential development in Palm Springs. Accordingly, it continues its association with a pattern of events that have made a meaningful contribution to the community.***

INTEGRITY SUMMARY: The RCCW complex appears to be in excellent condition partially due to the use of construction materials suitable for the harsh desert environment. This integrity analysis confirms that the buildings and site of the RCCW complex still possess all seven aspects of integrity. While the buildings have undergone numerous minor alterations since construction, virtually all of the character-defining features survive. The buildings and site retain a high degree of integrity sufficient to qualify them for designation as an historic district.

8. Bibliography

Attached is a list of books, articles, and other sources cited or used in preparing this application and other documentation that may be relevant.

Books

Architectural Resources Group. *City of Palm Springs Historic Resources Survey*. San Francisco, 2004

Cygelman, Adele. *Palm Springs Modern*. New York: Rizzoli, 1999

Hess, Alan and Andrew Danish. *Palm Springs Weekend: The Architecture and Design of a Midcentury Oasis*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2001

Johns, Howard. *Palm Springs Confidential*. Fort Lee, NJ: Barricade Books, 2004

Mungo, Ray. *Palm Springs Babylon*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993

National Park Service. *National Register Bulletin 15, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.

Rippingdale, Sally Presley. *The History of the Racquet Club of Palm Springs*. Yucaipa, CA: U.S. Business Specialties, 1984

Rosenow, Erik. *The Architecture of Desert Leisure*. Palm Springs: Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, 2013

Serraino, Pierluigi and Julius Shulman. *Modernism Rediscovered*. Cologne: Taschen, 2000

Sotta, Andy, et al. *The Architecture of William F. Cody: A Desert Retrospective*. Palm Springs: Palm Springs Preservation Foundation, 2004

Stern, Michael and Alan Hess. *Julius Shulman: Palm Springs*. New York: Rizzoli, 2008

Magazines & Newspapers

Myrna Oliver. *Paul Trousdale, Developer and Innovator, Dies*. *Los Angeles Times*, April 12, 1990

Taylor, J. M. F. *William F. Cody A.I.A.: A Comment on Architecture*. *Palm Springs Life*, August 1964

Taylor, Bud. *Crusade Against Mediocrity: A Profile of William F. Cody, A.I.A.* *Palm Springs Life*, 1960-61 Annual Pictorial (Vol III, No. 1)

Lotz, Jan. *Tennis' Silver Anniversary on the Desert*. *Palm Springs Life*, Jun-Jul 1960

Anonymous. *The Racquet Club: Movie Colony Hideaway*. *Palm Springs Life*, 1960-61 Annual Pictorial

Other Sources Consulted

- City of Palm Springs (Planning and Building Departments)
- Special Collections and University Archives, Robert F. Kennedy Library, Cal Poly (San Luis Obispo)
- Desert Resort Management (management company for RCGV)
- Palm Springs Historical Society
- Palm Springs Public Library
- Riverside County Assessor's Office

9. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: Approximately 3.22 acres (or 140,263 sq. ft.)

Property Boundary Description: See Appendix VI.

10. Prepared By

Name/title: Ronald W. Marshall
Organization: Submitted on behalf of the Palm Springs Preservation Foundation in partnership with the Racquet Club Garden Villas Homeowners Association
Street address: 1775 East Palm Canyon Drive, Suite 110-195
City: Palm Springs State: CA Zip: 92264
Telephone: (760) 837-7117
e-mail address: info@pspreservationfoundation.com

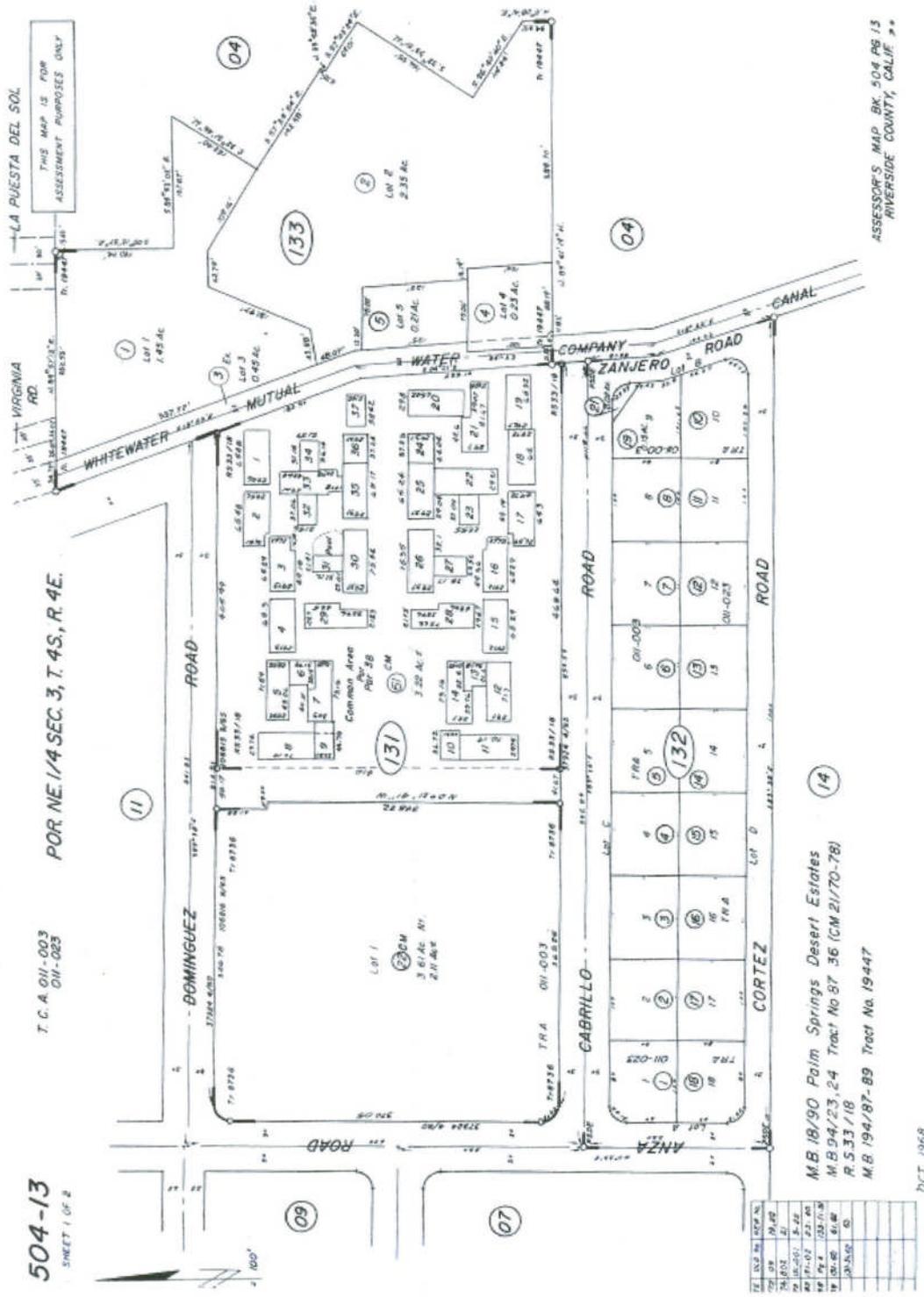
11. Required Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed application form. **Do not mount any exhibits on a board.**

1. **Attachment Sheets.** Include all supplemental information based on application form above).
2. **Maps:** For Historic Districts, include a sketch map identifying the proposed districts boundaries.
3. **Photographs:** Eight (8) sets of color photographs showing each elevation of the property and its surroundings.
4. **Non-owner's Notarized Signature:** If the applicant is not the owner, a notarized affidavit shall be provided (see following page).
5. **Site Plan:** One 1/8" to 1/4" scale drawing of the site, and eight reduction copies (8 ½ x 11 inches) The site plan shall show all of the following: Property boundaries, north arrow and scale, all existing buildings, structures, mechanical equipment, landscape materials, fences, walls, sidewalks, driveways, parking areas showing location of parking spaces, and signs. **Indicate the square footage and use of each building and the date(s) of construction.**
6. **Public Hearing Labels:** Three (3) sets of typed self-adhesive labels of all property owners, lessees, and sub-lessees of record. **The labels shall include the Assessor's parcel number, owner's name and mailing address of each property with 400 feet from the exterior limits of the subject property.** Additionally, all Assessor Parcel Maps clearly indicating the 400-foot radius and a certified letter from a title company licensed to conduct business in Riverside County, California shall be submitted.

Note: If any property on this list is owned by the United States Government in trust for the Agua Caliente Indian Tribe or individual allottee, copies of notices with postage paid envelopes will be submitted to the Bureau of Indian Affairs to notify the individual Indian land owners of the public hearings.

Appendix I: Assessor's Map (top of page is east)



Appendix II: Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs)

APN	360 WEST CABRILLO UNIT ADDRESS
504-131-023-9	105
504-131-024-0	107
504-131-025-1	114
504-131-026-2	118
504-131-027-3	123
504-131-028-4	122
504-131-029-5	125
504-131-030-5	128
504-131-032-7	231
504-131-033-8	232
504-131-034-9	227
504-131-035-0	226
504-131-036-1	229
504-131-037-2	222
504-131-038-3	218
504-131-039-4	211
504-131-040-4	209
504-131-041-5	207
504-131-042-6	201
504-131-043-7	205
504-131-044-8	213
504-131-045-9	214
504-131-046-0	202
504-131-047-1	204
504-131-048-2	217
504-131-049-3	220
504-131-050-3	224
504-131-051-4	120
504-131-052-5	113
504-131-053-6	116
504-131-054-7	110
504-131-055-8	109
504-131-056-9	103
504-131-057-0	104
504-131-058-1	102
504-131-059-2	101
504-131-063-5	127

(Common Area is Parcel 38)

Note: It is recommended that the Legal Description of the RCGV condominium complex provided at Appendix VI (rather than the compilation of APNs) be cited to describe the geographic boundaries of the proposed historic district)

Appendix III: William F. Cody Biography

William Francis Cody, FAIA (1916-1978) was an influential Desert Modern architect who practiced in Palm Springs at the peak of the Modernist movement. Between 1946 and 1973, Cody maintained a diverse practice in California's Coachella Valley, designing country clubs, residences, hotels, library, and church projects in the local communities of Palm Springs, Indian Wells, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, and in southern California, Arizona, Mexico, and Cuba.

Cody was born on June 19, 1916 in Dayton, Ohio, to William F. Cody, Sr., who owned a haberdashery and Anna Elizabeth Shadle, an interior designer. Cody and his brother John were both influenced by their mother's passion for art and architecture.



By 1930, the Codys had relocated to Los Angeles. While attending Beverly Hills High School, Cody designed and built stage sets for school plays with the son of Warner Bros. founder Jack L. Warner. Cody graduated from high school in April 1934 and began work the following year for architects Heath Warton and Asa Hudson while attending Santa Monica Junior College, graduating in 1939.

In 1940, Cody enrolled in the College of Architecture and Fine Arts at the University of Southern California, earning a Bachelor's degree in Architecture in 1942. At USC Cody was exposed to the Bauhaus style of art, architecture, and interior design, which emphasized a minimalist Modernism that would come to define Cody's own work. Another influence during this time was Cody's work for Cliff May, a leading southern California licensed building designer. According to a résumé found in the collection and his FAIA nomination, Cody worked in 1944 on May's influential Pace-Setter House, a modernized, low-cost California ranch house design.

That same year, Cody married Winifred Smith, with whom he had three daughters: Diane Louise (b. 1944), Winifred Lynne (b. 1948), and Catherine Louise (b. 1954).

In 1943, he worked for an Oakland engineering firm on a Kaiser steel plant in Fontana, California. That same year, he also worked for the San Francisco firm of Blanchard,

Maher and Ward on naval installations at Treasure Island, California. The following year, he worked for Marsh, Smith and Powell in Los Angeles, primarily on National Design Award-winning elementary and high school buildings in California and Arizona.

In March of 1946, Cody was licensed to practice architecture in California and secured his Arizona license the following month. In 1948, he applied for membership in the American Institute of Architects, listing his office location on Santa Monica Boulevard, in Los Angeles.

In 1945, Cody was retained to alter the Desert Inn, his first commission in Palm Springs. In 1947 he completed the Del Marcos Hotel, his first independent commission, which was recognized by the AIA Southern California Chapter with an honorable mention.

Post-World War II Palm Springs was becoming a fashionable weekend and winter retreat for the rich and famous, and Cody's career flourished along with the city. He moved his practice and his family to Palm Springs. In 1950, he was retained to lead the successful conversion of the Thunderbird Dude Ranch into the Thunderbird Country Club, which led to commissions to design or alter clubhouses, recreational facilities, and residential developments at Eldorado Country Club (with Ernest J. Kump), Tamarisk Country Club, the Racquet Club, and the Tennis Club. In 1960, he began almost a decade of work altering and expanding the Palm Springs Spa Hotel.

Cody's specialization in country club clubhouses with related residential developments led to additional commissions in California, Arizona, Texas, Cuba, and Mexico. His residential projects emphasized key elements of Modernism: simplicity of form, natural light, and large windows offering a seamless connection between residential interiors and the outdoors.

A member of AIA since 1948, Cody was elevated to Fellowship in the AIA in 1965, with the following projects cited on his nomination as Achievements in Architectural Design:

- William Francis Cody Residence | Palm Springs, CA 1946
- Del Marcos Hotel | Palm Springs, CA 1947
- Levin Residence | Palm Springs, CA 1948
- Haines Office Building | Beverly Hills, CA 1949
- Mission Valley Country Club | San Diego, CA 1953
- Jorgensen Residence | Palm Springs, CA 1954
- Springs Restaurant | Palm Springs, CA 1956
- El Dorado Country Club | Palm Desert, CA 1958
- Spa Bathhouse | Palm Springs, CA 1958
- Clare Residence | Palm Springs, CA 1959
- Nicoletti Residence | Palm Springs, CA 1960
- Palo Alto Hills Golf and Country Club | Palo Alto, CA 1961
- Roundhill Country Club | Alamo, CA 1961
- Sloane Residence | La Quinta, CA 1961
- Western Savings & Loan | Tempe, AZ 1961
- Cannon Residence | Palm Desert, CA 1962
- Driggs Residence | Phoenix, AZ 1962

- Spa Bathhouse & Hotel | Palm Springs, CA 1962
- Abernathy Residence | Palm Springs, CA 1963
- Shamel Residence | Palm Desert, CA 1963
- Western Savings & Loan | Phoenix, AZ 1964

Cody also worked extensively with Robert P. McCulloch, an industrialist who parlayed his racing-engine manufacturing fortune into diverse business interests, including oil and gas exploration, electronics, and land and real estate development. When McCulloch founded Lake Havasu City, Arizona, Cody designed, altered and added to McCulloch Corporation chain saw plants there. For McCulloch Properties, Inc., Cody designed Arizona residential developments in Lake Havasu City and Fountain Hills in Scottsdale, and an Eldorado tract in Indian Wells, California. He also designed a McCulloch corporate complex near Los Angeles airport and alterations and an addition to a house for McCulloch and his wife at Thunderbird Country Club in 1972.

Cody's last notable commissions were located in Palm Springs: St. Theresa Catholic Church and Convent (1966-68) and buildings for the Palm Springs Planning Collaborative, including the Palm Springs Public Library (1973) in the Brutalist style. A stroke then limited his career until his death on 29 August 1978 in Palm Springs.

Leaving behind a legacy of important contributions to what is known today as Desert Modernism; Cody's career continues to serve as an inspiration to successive generations of architects. In addition to his work, his legacy includes mentoring; among his apprentices were Richard Holden, William Johnson, Richard Harrison and Donald Wexler.

During Modernism Week 2012, Cody was awarded a Star on the Palm Springs Walk of Fame.

(Excerpted primarily from the biography which introduces the William F. Cody Papers 2, 1918-1980 (MS163) housed at the Cal Poly (San Luis Obispo) Robert E. Kennedy Library)

Appendix IV: Paul W. Trousdale Biography

Born on a farm near Gallatin, Tennessee in 1915, Paul Whitney Trousdale grew up shuttling between relatives in New York, Tennessee and Los Angeles. He graduated from Los Angeles High School. Trousdale's sales talent emerged during his single year at the University of Southern California (USC), when he sold cars, clothes and automobile spotlights, earning enough, he once told an interviewer, to "take out 4,000 or 5,000 girls."

Loading freight elevators during a vacation job with an uncle in New York, Trousdale suffered a crushed foot. The New York State Industrial Department awarded him \$5,000 for college, and the adventuring Trousdale took it, got on a steamer and went around the world. Landing in San Pedro, 20 years old and broke in the height of the Depression, he immediately eloped with his USC sweetheart, Margaret Reid. The marriage lasted nearly 30 years.

Trousdale started selling gum--but switched to real estate because he decided it was better to sell something big, like buildings. In 1946, he established Trousdale Construction Company. and began building tract homes and communities complete with churches and shopping centers, including many in minority areas, in Long Beach, Wilmington, Compton and the San Fernando Valley.

"I built community centers in those projects," he proudly recalled, "and a community swimming pool, play yards and a clubhouse in each."

At one point, his company had so many outstanding loans with Bank of America that the bank founder, A. P. Giannini, personally popped into Trousdale's Westwood Hills office to quiz him on how much he was paying for nails and concrete.

A marketing innovator, Trousdale taught prospective buyers of his three-bedroom, two-bath homes in Westdale Village--a development built in West Los Angeles in the late 1940s--how to furnish such a house on a limited budget. Giving his project decorators only \$1,000, he had them prepare a model as "The House of Hand-Me-Downs," buying furniture and knickknacks at second-hand stores and bargain basements.

In 1954, Trousdale purchased the 410-acre Doheny Ranch in the hills north of Beverly Hills and went into upscale development. One-acre home sites in his new Trousdale Estates sold for \$40,000. Trousdale Estates was his crowning achievement and he even persuaded the City of Beverly Hills to stretch its borders to include the development.

During the same period, Trousdale created residential communities in pricey Marin County north of San Francisco, in Hawaii and Palm Springs. In all he is estimated to have built 25,000 homes throughout southern California.

Trousdale died in 1990 at the age of 75 in Santa Barbara, California.

Appendix V: Philip A. Shipley Biography

Born in Santa Paula, California, landscape architect Phil Shipley's career included work for such clients as Clark Gable, Walt Disney and Steven Spielberg. Shipley earned a degree in landscape architecture from UC Berkeley in 1933 and set up his practice in Southern California, designing grounds for the wealthy and famous from San Diego to Santa Barbara.

Known for his simple but unusual designs, Shipley worked for hotels including Las Vegas' Tropicana and Los Angeles' Sheraton Universal Studios, clubs such as Palm Springs' Eldorado Country Club, Presidents Ronald Reagan and Richard Nixon, and entertainment figures including Lew Wasserman, Jules Stein, Frank Sinatra, King Vidor, Kirk and Michael Douglas, Aaron Spelling and Norton Simon.

Shipley's other commissions included commercial and research complexes such as the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, TRW headquarters in El Segundo and Universal Studios.

Shipley died at the age of 88 on July 5, 2001 in Tahoe City, California.

(Excerpted from the *Los Angeles Times* newspaper, August 3, 2001)

Appendix VI: Legal Description (provided by Desert Resort Management)

EXHIBIT "A"

The land referred to in this report is situated in the County of Riverside, State of California, and is described as follows:

That portion of the Northeast quarter of Section 3, Township 4 South, Range 4 East, San Bernardino Meridian, in the City of Palm Springs, County of Riverside, State of California, according to the official plat thereof, described as follows:

Beginning at the Northeast corner of Lot C, as per map of Palm Springs Desert Estates, recorded in Book 18 Page 90 of Maps, Official Records of Riverside County, California;

thence North $04^{\circ}01'00''$ West, 30.09 feet on the Westerly right of way of the Whitewater Mutual Water Company, to the true point of beginning;

thence North $89^{\circ}38'00''$ West, 529.24 feet parallel to the North line of said Lot C;

thence North $00^{\circ}22'00''$ East, 348.18 feet;

thence North $89^{\circ}38'00''$ West, 8.50 feet;

thence North $00^{\circ}22'00''$ East, 61.88 feet;

thence South $89^{\circ}38'00''$ East, 456.16 feet parallel to the South line of Lot J of Spaulding's Palm Springs Estates, as per map recorded in Book 20 Page 72 of Maps, Official Records of Riverside County, California, to a point on the Westerly right-of-way line of said Whitewater Mutual Water Company;

thence South $19^{\circ}53'00''$ East, 182.90 feet on said right-of-way line;

thence continuing on said right of way line, South $04^{\circ}01'00''$ East, 239.10 feet to the true point of beginning.

Except the right to any deposits of oil, gas or other hydrocarbon substances and water underlying said land, provided, however, that such reservation shall not be deemed to give the Grantor, its successors or assigns, any right to enter upon said premises for the development of any such water, oil, gas or other hydrocarbon substances, as reserved by Security-First National Bank of Los Angeles, by deed recorded January 11, 1936 in Book 262 Page 533 of Official Records.

Portion of said land is also shown as Parcels 1 to 38 inclusive on a map filed in Book 33 Page 18 of Records of Surveys, in the Office of the County Recorder of said County.

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4 of 4



**Appendix VII: Current Mailing Addresses for the RCGV Condominium Complex
(provided by Desert Resort Management)**

Tue May 07, 2013 09:33 am
Report: sp_rpt_unit_information

Racquet Club Garden Villas HOA

Unit City State Zip	Unit Address
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #101
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #102
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #103
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #104
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #105
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #107
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #109
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #110
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #113
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #114
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #116
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #118
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #120
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #122
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #123
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #125
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #127
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #128
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #201
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #202
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #204
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #205
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #207
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #209
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #211
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #213
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #214
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #217
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #218
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #220
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #222
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #224
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #226
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #227
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #229
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #231
Palm Springs, CA 92262	360 Cabrillo Road #232

**Appendix VIII: Buildings to Current Units to Historical Units to Historical Parcels
Table**

Building (Note 1)	Current Unit Numbers	“Historical” Unit Numbers (Note 2)	“Historical” Parcel Numbers
A	105, 107	105, 106, 107, 108	1, 2
B	114, 118	114, 115, 118, 119	3, 4
C	122, 123, 125	122, 123, 124, 125, 126	5, 6, 7
D	127, 128	127, 128, 129	8, 9
E	231, 232	231, 232, 233	10, 11
F	226, 227, 229	226, 227, 228, 229, 230	12, 13, 14
G	218, 222	218, 219, 222, 223	15, 16
H	209, 211	209, 210, 211, 212	17, 18
I	207	207, 208	19
J	201, 205	201, 203, 205, 206	20, 21
K	202, 204, 213, 214	202, 204, 213, 214, 215, 216	22, 23, 24, 25
L	217, 220	217, 220, 221	26, 27
M	224	224, 225	28
N	120	120, 121	29
O	113, 116	113, 116, 117	30, 31
P	103, 109, 110	103, 109, 110, 111	32, 33, 34
Q	102, 104	102, 104, 112	35, 36
R	101	101	37
18 Buildings	37 Current Units	62 Historical Units	37 Historical Parcels

Note 1: “Building” is simply a roofed-over structure and is included as a requirement of the city’s historic district application. The lettering convention used is wholly arbitrary. Buildings “P” and “Q” are connected only by a wing wall and are herein identified as two separate buildings.

Note 2: The Historical Unit Numbers are presented in ascending order for clarity only. For example, historical unit numbers 113 and 117 belong to the same parcel number (#30) and together represent a Full Cottage unit. Intervening historical address 116 is a different parcel number (#31) and is a Bachelor unit.

Appendix IX: Photographic Documentation of Buildings and Site

Note: Detailed photographic documentation of the 21 buildings (37 units) of the RCCW complex and common areas is provided as a separate enclosure on a compact disk. These photographs are provided separately to illustrate various elevations and architectural features of the units and common areas.



Figure 1. Pool fountain detail. Unseen are the underwater parabolic corners of the pool which swoop outward and are suggestive of the parabolic forms used in Cody's later commissions.



Figure 2. The original (unbuilt) plot plan of the RCCW complex made the large pool and stately cabana the center of the complex.

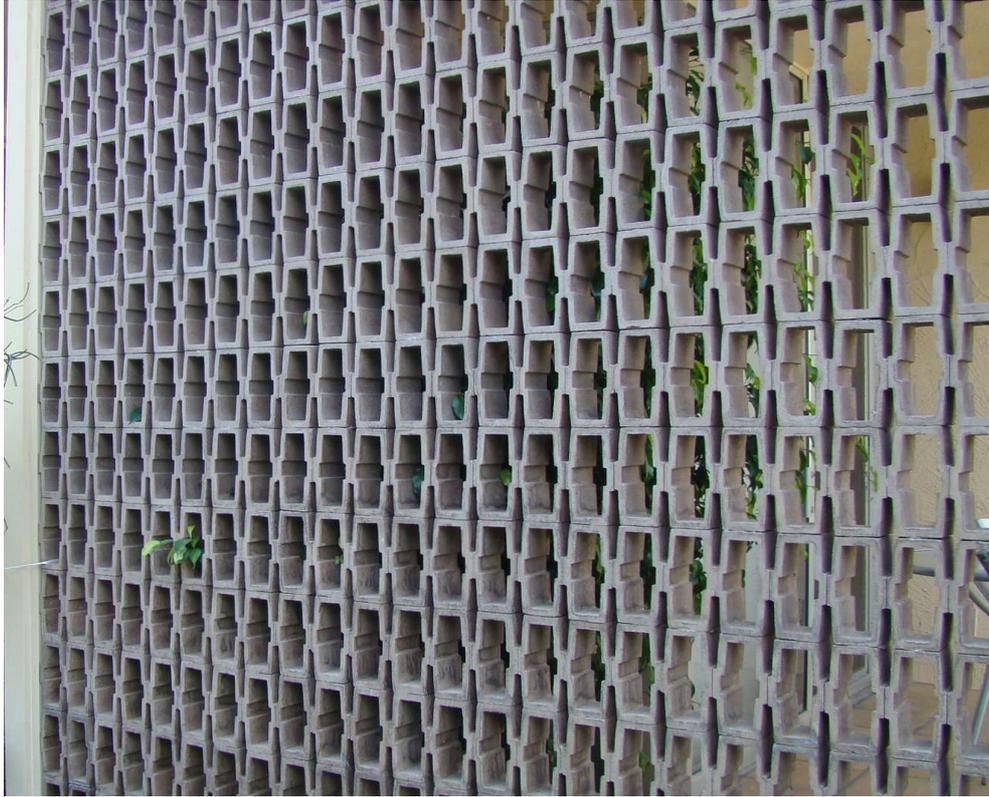


Figure 3. Extant concrete screen block wall

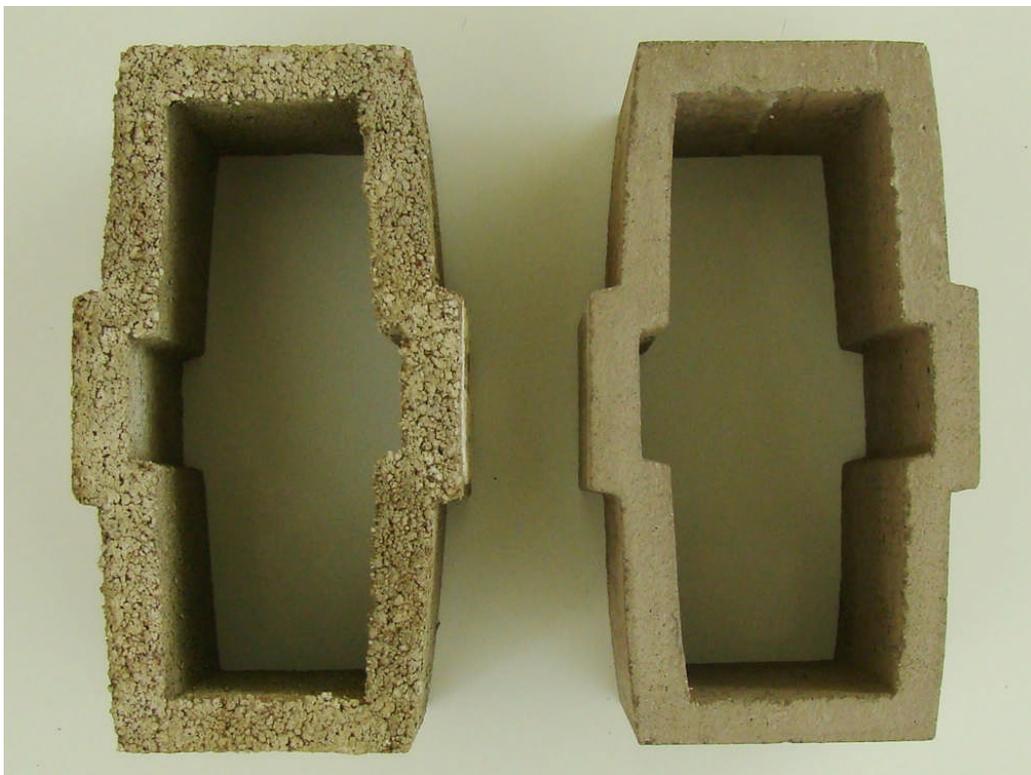


Figure 4. Original dry-packed concrete screen block (left) with new screen block (right)



Figure 5. Occasionally, and possibly in conjunction with Bachelor units only, Cody's concrete block design is laid horizontally creating an interesting variation of the pattern.



Figure 6. The RCCW condominium complex also sees use of the “Empress” pattern concrete screen block to add more privacy to the pool and cabana area. While well-executed, and appropriate for the time period, this block may have been added later.



Figure 7. Concrete screen block wall and block detail



Figure 8. Concrete screen block wall being reconstructed with new block



Figure 9. Cody's idiosyncratic use of concrete block in the RCCW complex includes some clever corner details.



Figure 10. A portion of the man-made stream that meanders through the verdant RCCW complex.



Figure 11. Roof eave detail designed for sun control



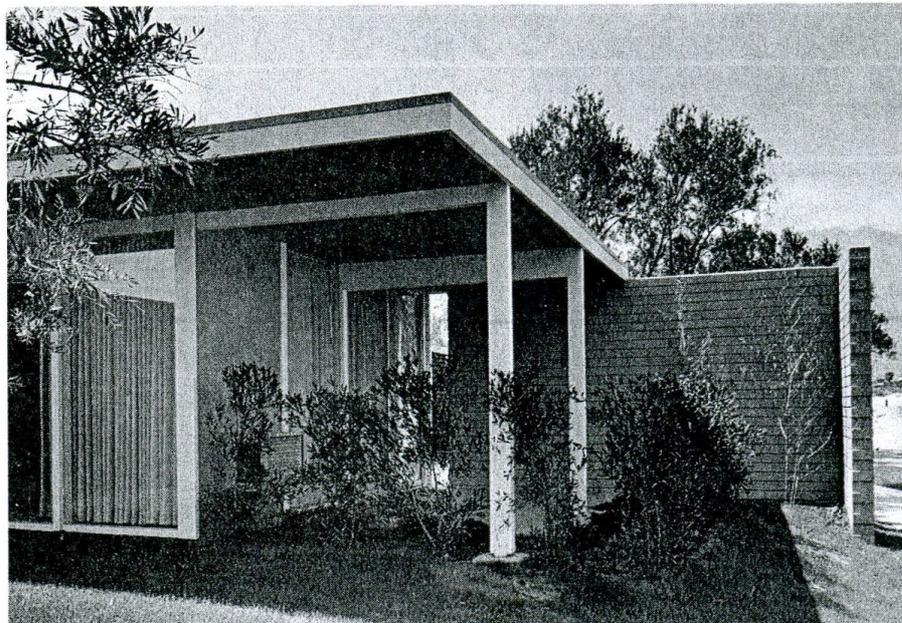
Figure 12. Current Racquet Club Garden Villas signage

Appendix X: Miscellaneous Photographs and Documentation



Figure 1. Developer Paul Trousdale (far right) was active on the Palm Springs social scene and owned a home on the famous Smoke Tree Ranch (Photograph courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society)

The Racquet Club is now leasing its newly-completed cottages which offer privacy of home without caretaking responsibilities. William F. Cody, A.I.A. was designer, Paul W. Trousdale, builder.



W. F. Anderson

Figure 2. As explained in the caption of this vintage photo, the RCCW units were originally intended as rental units of the Racquet Club (from the June/July 1960 issue of *Palm Springs Life* magazine) (Photograph by W. F. Anderson courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society).



Figure 3. In this 1960 photo from *Palm Springs Life* magazine, actress Rhonda Fleming poses with her husband (Lang Jeffries) in a Racquet Club Cottages West kitchen. Owning or leasing a Racquet Club cottage could provide one an opportunity to rub elbows with the Hollywood elite. (Photograph by W. F. Anderson courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society)

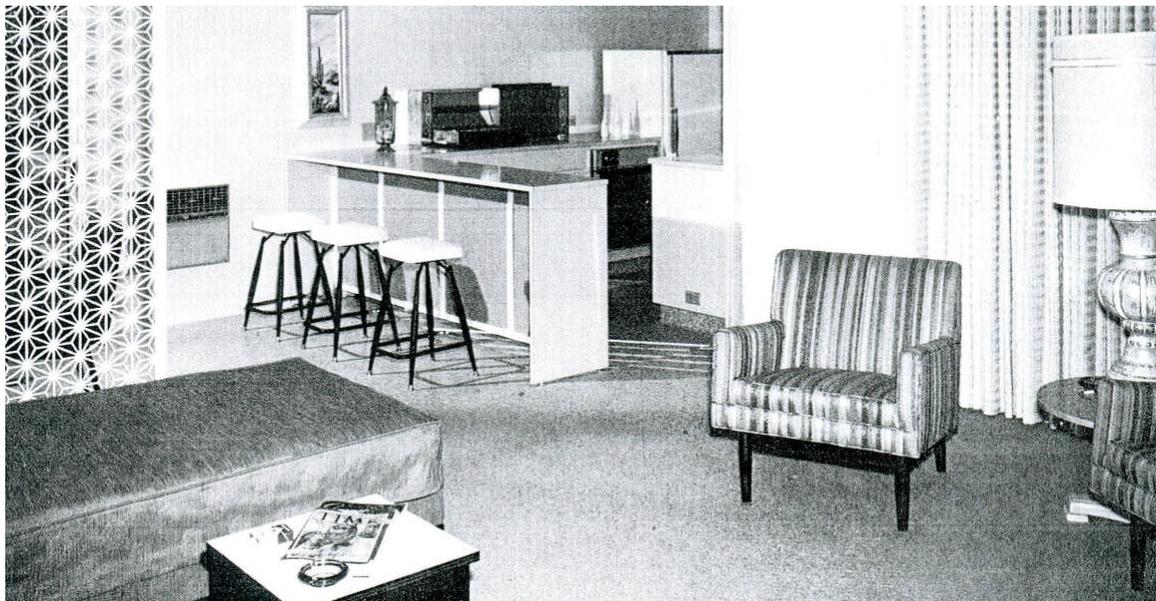


Figure 4. The caption of this 1960 photo from *Palm Springs Life* magazine reads "Pictured is a portion of the living room-kitchen in the luxurious new Racquet Club Cottages which are available in a choice of four different floor plans. (Photograph by W. F. Anderson courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society)

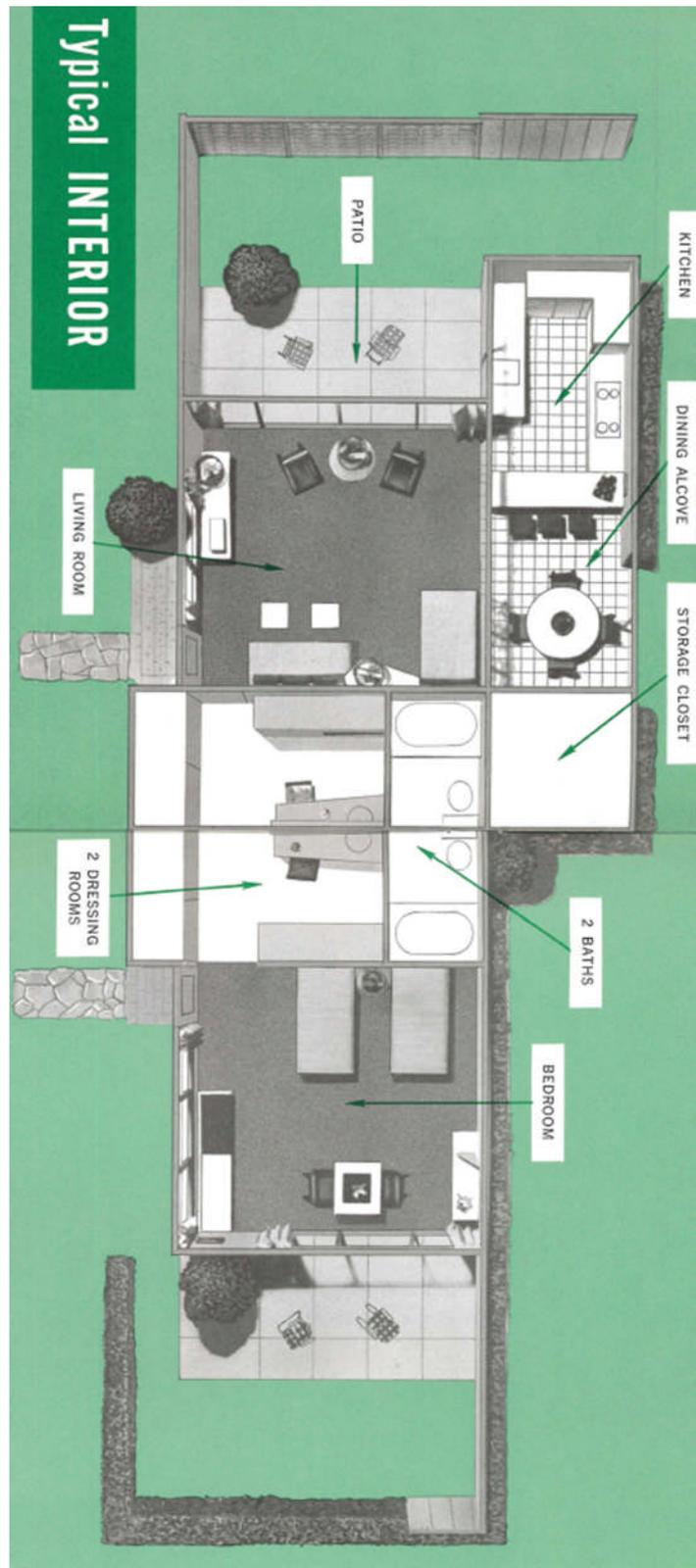


Figure 5. This schematic of a Full Cottage floorplan (which has been rotated 180 degrees from the plan shown earlier) shows the notional placement of furniture. (Courtesy Palm Springs Historical Society)

Designed by Galanos

When a motorist takes possession of his first Cadillac, he usually does so expecting extraordinary things. But only rarely does he suspect how satisfying the car will be from the standpoint of practicality! And that is why Cadillac's remarkably low cost . . . its wonderful economy of upkeep and operation . . . and the marvelous manner in which it retains its value . . . are all so deeply satisfying.

For they come as extra dividends, so to speak, for his wisdom in choosing the "Standard of the World". If you have always wanted a Cadillac for its obvious qualities, then we suggest you visit your dealer and investigate these lesser known Cadillac virtues. He'll be happy to see you—and to acquaint you with some very special news about cost and delivery. CADILLAC MOTOR CAR DIVISION • GENERAL MOTORS CORPORATION

Cadillac

Figure 6. This advertisement for the 1956 Cadillac, with ladies in Galanos gowns, used the world-famous Racquet Club as its sophisticated backdrop.

Appendix XI: Historical Addresses of Principals

Architect:

William F. Cody, A.I.A.
850 S. Palm Canyon Drive
Palm Springs, California
Telephone: FAirview 5-2892

Builder:

Trousdale Construction Company (Paul Trousdale, principal)
650 North Sepulveda Boulevard
Los Angeles 49, California
Telephone: BRadshaw 2-4129

Interior Designer:

L. R. Belmuth and Company (Lester R. Belmuth, principal)
7957 West 3rd Street
Los Angeles 48, California
Telephone: WEbster 3-5588

Racquet Club Owner:

Mr. Robert S. Morton
490 East Green Street
Pasadena, California